

SPURLOCK

MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER
Spring 2010

The newsletter of
the Spurlock Museum

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A MESSAGE FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

By Wayne Pitard, Director



SPRING 2010

WILLIAM R. AND CLARICE V. SPURLOCK MUSEUM

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Museum Hours:
Tuesday: Noon - 5 pm
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9 am - 5 pm
Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm
Sunday: Noon - 4 pm
Monday: closed

www.spurlock.illinois.edu

The newsletter for Spurlock Museum is published through the generous support of the Spurlock Museum Guild and the Spurlock Museum Board. Spurlock Museum Board Publication Committee: Allan Campbell, Robin Fossum (chair), Wayne Pitard, James Sinclair, Yu (Ian) Wang, and Beth Watkins. The newsletter is produced for the Museum by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Office of Communications and Marketing (10.044).

I am happy to report that in spite of the financial difficulties the University has been facing this academic year, the Spurlock Museum has continued to flourish and move in innovative new directions. Of course, the most exciting development of the autumn has been our achievement of accreditation from the American Association of Museums, an honor that only 5 percent of museums in the United States have obtained. Accreditation officially recognizes the high standards of museum practices that our staff has instituted here since we opened in 2002, as well as the quality of the building we inhabit. This recognition allows us to have a voice in the ongoing national discussions concerning the direction of museum policy and development at a higher level than was possible before, and it reinforces the status of the Spurlock Museum as one of the jewels of the University of Illinois.

If you haven't visited the Museum in a while, come back and take a look. Changes in our feature galleries are beginning to appear. The South American part of the Laubin Gallery of American Indian Cultures is in the final stages of a significant reworking. The first of our kid-friendly interactives is up and running in the Simonds Pyatt

Gallery of European Cultures. Read more about other planned installations in "The Galleries Go Interactive" on page 3. We have also just received a grant from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement to develop a major new interactive area highlighting the current research on our wonderful collection of ancient Mesopotamian cylinder seals. This exhibit will be a collaboration between the Museum and the Advanced Visualization Laboratory of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications here at the University, headed by Donna Cox. Expect to see this new feature by the end of the year.

As we approach our centennial celebration in 2011, the entire staff wishes to thank all of you for your continued support. The encouragement we receive from the general public, the area schools, and the University community has helped to bring us to an exciting new phase of our history. We invite you to come to the creative range of programs and events we have scheduled here throughout both this year and next and to continue to get familiar with our magnificent collection of artifacts from around the world.

On the cover: A shaman curing ceremony depicted on a mola in the Spurlock Museum collection.



College of
Liberal Arts & Sciences
AT ILLINOIS

This page: Some of the many ways the people of the ancient Mediterranean world wore simple rectangles of cloth. Visitors, dressed as European elites from centuries past, admire their fashionable finery.



EDUCATION UPDATE

By Beth Watkins

THE GALLERIES GO INTERACTIVE

Inspired by the success of last year's temporary exhibit *Children Just Like Me*, which was full of fun, touchable activities and props, Director Wayne Pitard and the Education and Collections sections have developed some new hands-on, kid-friendly components for Spurlock's feature galleries. Our first interactive installation is a station in the European gallery that was built for the Campbell Gallery exhibit *Why Knot?* in 2007. At this station, visitors can try on 16th-century-style ruffs (lace collars), then admire themselves in a mirror as they stand behind a large wooden cut-out painted with period clothing to get the full effect of these elaborate and ostentatious accessories.

Clothing and adornment items are popular items for both display and visitor activities. The Museum's teaching collection—artifacts that can be loaned to schools or used in hands-on programs in the Museum—already contains dozens of fun things to wear. Some of these will be put in activity areas in the feature galleries: mud cloth in Africa, saris and other Indian-influenced textiles in Asia, and instructions and

supplies to create the many styles of ancient Greek and Roman clothing based on a simple rectangle of fabric. In the Americas, where artifacts comprise a dazzling array of natural materials, we hope to let visitors explore some of the more unusual ones in "touch boxes." Horn, hides, sinew, quills, shells, and feathers hide in cubbyholes as visitors bravely reach in and try to guess what their fingers are feeling. Our educators have already tested out a variety of hands-on experiences related to mummification in ancient Egypt. Among the most popular is sampling a set of materials used in mummification: feeling linen strips used to wrap the mummy; smelling the oils, precious resins, and other materials used in embalming; and examining amulets and charms. And in Mesopotamia, a multimedia installation called "Miniature Masterpieces: The Art of the Mesopotamian Cylinder Seal" will invite visitors to investigate the seals' artistry and imagery in a way never before possible as they explore the stunningly detailed images of these ancient pieces created in the Museum's polynomial texture mapping photo studio. This project is funded in part through a grant from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement awarded to Director Pitard and the Illinois Emerging Digital Research and Education in Arts Media Institute (eDream). (See the "Message from the Museum Director" on page 2 for details on this exciting new project!)

In addition to the interactive aspect of *Children Just Like Me*, Spurlock staff members were also excited by



the opportunity the exhibit created to put new interpretive content in our feature galleries. Because the modules of *Children Just Like Me* were installed throughout the whole Museum, both staff and visitors enjoyed these new ways of understanding our exhibits and relating to the artifacts. One of our planned projects builds on the public's response to *Children Just Like Me* by placing a series of temporary labels on exhibit cases to highlight artifacts that fit thematic discussions across the galleries, such as children's items, jewelry, and currency. These temporary labels not only can add new information without the cost of changing the permanent labels but also enable the Museum to raise questions that encourage visitors to look at artifacts in new ways.





NEW ACQUISITIONS

MOLA

FROM THE SAN BLAS ISLANDS

By James Sinclair

The Spurlock Museum constantly enriches its collections with new acquisitions. Recently, Gerard Lopez donated his collection of over 50 mola panels from the San Blas Islands of Panama. The term *mola* refers to both the everyday blouse worn by the Kuna Indian women and the individual appliquéd rectangular panels attached to the front and back of a blouse. This set of pieces is just one component of the larger Kieffer-Lopez collection of international textiles.

Molas are handmade by the women, and each piece is a one-of-a-kind design consisting of two to eight layers of fabric, usually

colorful cotton cloth. These layers are sewn together with fine, almost invisible, stitching, and then the maker cuts holes in shapes and patterns to reveal one or more of the

layers below. Decorative stitching of different colors is used to enhance the design and add details to the panel. The embroidery stitches used include straight, back, buttonhole, chain, cross, and couching.

The making of molas dates back to the mid-19th century. Because of their fragility and constant use, no pieces from the 19th century are known to have survived, and the

earliest extant molas come from the 1920s. The pieces in the Kieffer-Lopez collection date to the early 1960s and late 1970s when Mr. Lopez's travels took him to Panama and the San Blas Islands. The contemporary politics and daily life of these time periods are reflected in the designs on the molas in his collection. Mola designs are inspired by a variety of sources: the natural world, tribal legends, past historical events, dreams, and imaginary thoughts. Designs based on the environment dominate most of the panels; however, the material and political culture of the modern world has influenced some of the more recent motifs.



More Details about Egyptian Mummy Uncovered

By Sarah Wisseman

In 1989, the University Program on Ancient Technologies and Archaeological Materials (ATAM) organized an interdisciplinary team to examine the Spurlock Museum's human Egyptian mummy. Our goals were to assess the age, sex, medical history, social status, and cause of death of the person inside the wrappings, all without damaging the mummy. Medical imaging specialists from the School of Veterinary Medicine and two local hospitals used X-rays and CT scans to "see" inside the mummy, and University scientists tested minute samples of materials such as cloth and resin to study embalming practices in Egypt in the period of Roman rule.

X-ray images of teeth and growth plates (gaps at the ends of the long bones) showed that our mummy was a child, about eight years old. Sex could not be identified because the pelvis was underdeveloped. CT scans at Carle Clinic revealed internal organs still in place and a wooden "stiffening" board underneath the mummy. Not removing the viscera was a common practice during the Roman period, when embalmers concentrated on the external appearance of mummies rather than tissue preservation.

The 3-D reconstructions of the Spurlock mummy, one a sculpture of the mummy's head by forensic artist Raymond Evenhouse and the other a virtual rendering of the entire mummy using the University's supercomputer, attracted considerable media interest and participation in international mummy conferences. In 2008, Marc Walton of the Getty Conservation Institute and Marie Svoboda of the J. Paul Getty Museum retested a sample of pigment from the red stucco shroud of our mummy, along with red pigment from several other Roman period "red shroud mummies" from different museums. The mineral composition of the red pigment is the same in all eight mummies. It shows evidence of high-temperature processing and trace elements matching ore from Rio Tinto ("tinted river"), Spain, a site extensively mined for silver during the first century CE. This red lead is also called minium, named after the Minius River in northwest Spain. Minium was an exotic and expensive ingredient, almost certainly reserved for upper-class mummies.

The pigment results fit well with the careful wrapping revealed by medical imaging and the elaborate decoration on the mummy's exterior. Clearly, our unknown child belonged to a well-to-do family living in Egypt around 100 CE. Look for more on the mummy project on ATAM's website (www.itarp.illinois.edu/atam/research/mummy/index.html) and in a redevelopment of the mummy display in the Spurlock's Egyptian gallery in the near future.

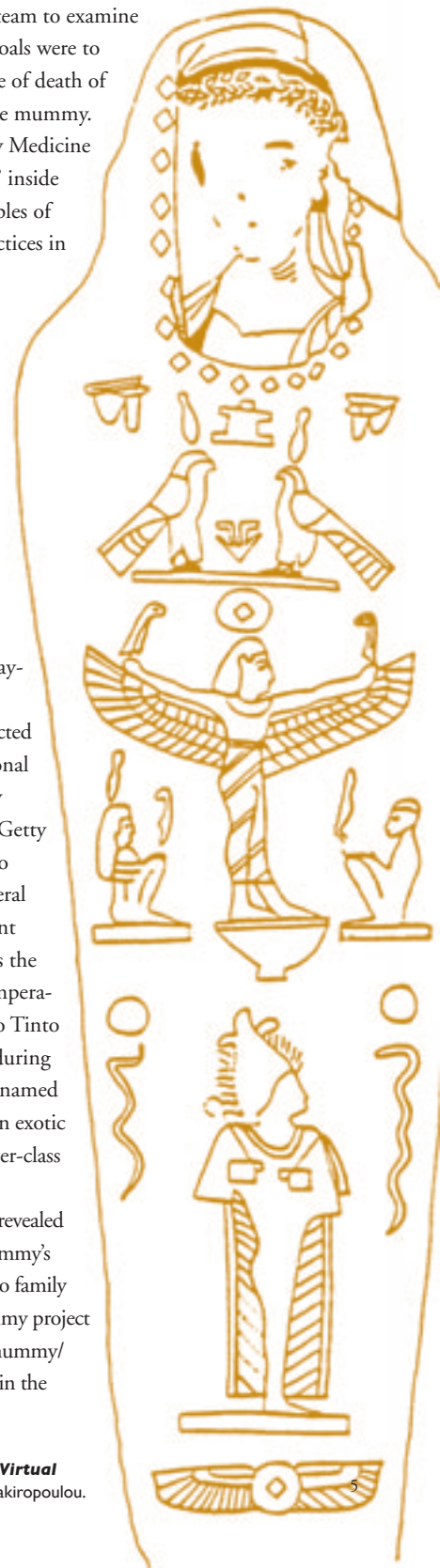
Sarah Wisseman is director of the ATAM program and author of *The Virtual Mummy* (University of Illinois Press, 2003). Drawing at right by A. Tsakiropoulou.



Mr. Lopez's collection will serve as a wonderful research resource for individuals wishing to learn more about this fascinating textile tradition. Museums such as the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, and the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., also hold large collections of molas.

References: Kit S. Kapp, *Mola Art from the San Blas Islands*, 1972.

Clockwise from top left: Shaman curing ceremony; a celebration of the Panama Canal Treaty of 1903 (also known as the Hey-Bunau Varilla Treaty); a ferryboat or fishing boat; and a political mola for the Panama Republican Party (ca. 1968).



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



The Spurlock Museum Board was very active in 2009, revising its bylaws, reorganizing its committee structure, and planning for the future. At the annual meeting in October, the re-

vised bylaws were adopted, stipulating that Board officers will serve a two-year term. Long-time friends of the Museum Betty Ann Knight and Sara Lo were designated as Honorary Board Members for their long and faithful service to the Museum.

Our Board committees will be busy in 2010 with a wide variety of activities, including the new Spurlock Horticultural Committee. In July 2011, the Spurlock Museum will mark 100 years of life as a cultural resource for the University, community, and beyond. Planning for the Spurlock Museum centennial celebration is actively underway. See the "Behind the Scenes" update on the centennial in this newsletter to learn what staff, board, and volunteers have been working on.

The highlight of 2009 was accreditation of the Museum by the American Association of Museums. This accomplishment required a huge effort on the part of the Museum staff and is a wonderful and most deserved achievement. Our status as an accredited museum will facilitate increased interaction with other similarly accredited museums and should open the door for new opportunities. I am honored to serve as president of the Board and look forward to receiving input from all interested parties for the support and development of the Museum. I have joined the American Association of Museums and the Museum Trustee Association in order to access their resources. These are difficult economic times for our state and University. Individual support of the Museum will be increasingly important in the future to sustain its programs and development. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Allan C. Campbell, MD



BEHIND THE SCENES

MUSEUM PLANS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The Spurlock Museum will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2011. The staff, board, and volunteers have been meeting since August 2008 to prepare for this significant milestone. Planning a year's worth of special exhibits, events, and activities is a huge undertaking, and committees are working on major components of the celebrations.

- **Special Events:** In addition to favorite annual events like WorldFest, there are plans for a birthday party, cultural performances, scholarly lectures, and invitation-only events for Museum Friends. We are also meeting with staff from Krannert Art Museum, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2011, to plan collaborative activities and promotions.
- **Marketing:** Our big birthday is a perfect opportunity to promote the Museum to new audiences using new media outlets, high-visibility signage, and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.
- **The publications committee** has plans for both online and print articles that update the Museum's history, highlight forgotten eras and little-known episodes, and share images from our archives. This year's *Spurlock Museum* magazine will feature several stories on intriguing people, collections, and projects from the last 100 years.
- **Board member Charles Hundley** is leading a special development committee to help provide support for centennial plans and resources for the Museum's dreams for the future.
- **A year-long special exhibit** will explore the Museum's history, collections, and roles in the community. This exhibit includes visitor-selected artifacts, a three-dimensional timeline, discussions with campus cultural groups about issues of representation, curator and staff favorites, and a peek at some of our more unusual artifacts.

You can contribute to our centennial plans by visiting the special section of our website at www.spurlock.illinois.edu/events/100. There you can complete a planning survey and leave your own memories of the Spurlock and World Heritage Museums. As you visit the Museum throughout 2010, look for parts of our centennial celebrations already in progress. Staff and volunteers have made great progress in the redevelopment of the Museum's four cultural gardens. In the exhibits, look for gallery companions, self-guided booklets on special topics, and new, colorful thematic case signage linking similar artifacts across cultures.

If you have questions or suggestions for any of these projects, please contact centennial committee chairperson Kim Sheahan at ksheahan@illinois.edu.



Clockwise from top left of page 6:
Allan C. Campbell, MD, Board
president; Registration table: Helen
Burch and Jennifer Buchanan;
Robert Fossum, treasurer, and
guests Everett and Kate Westmeyer;
Guild president Tony Michalos; Joy
Thornton-Walter and George Batzli.

SPURLOCK MUSEUM GUILD UPDATE



The Spurlock Museum Guild celebrated its 20th anniversary with a dinner and auction on Friday, October 30, 2009, at the I Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign. The theme of the event was "Guilded" in Platinum. Ruth V. Watkins, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and her spouse, Bob Young, were the honorary hosts. Robin Fossum and Pola Triandis, former presidents of the Guild, cochaired the fundraiser.

The Guild is committed to education by sponsoring literary and cultural events for school children and adults through the Museum. Our annual fundraisers and auctions give us the chance to realize our educational objectives. Over the 20 years of the Guild's existence, we have donated over \$350,000 to the Museum.

This year's auction raised \$25,000, which will enable us to sponsor cultural programs and fulfill our educational goals. In this issue of the newsletter, we would like to acknowledge our sponsors and donors and thank them for their generosity.

Many of our members have also been active at the Museum itself. Winter weather does not mean a break for our master gardeners, who are busy making plans for spring and summer activities. The Museum's gardens, meticulously taken care of by our members, are not only ornamental but are teaching gardens as well, with distinct areas of culturally-specific flowers, herbs, and medicinal plants.

The Guild plans the following activities for the year 2010:

- The annual winter luncheon will take place on Friday, February 19 at the Silvercreek Restaurant in Urbana.
- The annual dean's luncheon for the Guild members will take place on Thursday, May 13 at the University of Illinois Foundation (Harker Hall), hosted by Dean Ruth V. Watkins.
- The upcoming annual auction fundraiser will take place at the I Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign on Friday, September 24.



The Spurlock Museum represents the wealth of world culture in both artifacts and words. The Guild always welcomes new members and volunteers. To join, please send a message to our treasurer Robert Fossum at robertfossum@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Tony Michalos
Spurlock Museum Guild President

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Davis, Elisabeth
Dessen Loretta
Duncan, Monsignor Edward
Dussinger, Astrid
Eastern Rug Company
Economy, James & Stacey
English Hedgerow
Escobar Restaurant
Estate Sale (The)
Fagan, Beverly
Fleurish Flower Art
Fossum, Robert & Robin
Framer's Market
Franciscono, Reni
Fuad's Hair Design
Gentry, Rita
Gershenfeld, Joel & Susan
Giles, Eugene & Inga
Great Frame-Up
Great Impasta
Green, Jane
Heartland Gallery
Heiligenstein, John
Henderson, Judy
Hooey Batiks
Hummel, John & Judy
Ikenberry, Stan & Judy
International Galleries
Istanbul Restaurant
Jim Gould's Restaurant
Kennedy's at Stone Creek
Kinser, Kathy
Knappenberger, Jill
Ko-Fusion
Krannert Center - KCPA
Landis, Martha
Le Peep Restaurant
Lo, Sara
Maguire, Marguerite
Marcovich, Verica
Mas Amigos
Merritt, Anna
Meyers, Karen
Micetich, John & Grace
Miko's Restaurant
Miller, John B
Milo's Restaurant
Minneci's Ristorante
Natural Gourmet
Nemeth, Sarah
News-Gazette
Original Pancake House
Osborn, Howard & Jean
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Parkland College
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Premier Printing Group
Putnam, Toni
Pyatt, Jonathan
Pyatt, Richard & Gayl
Rector Adlon
Regen, Atron
Schwegman, Michael
Sheahan, Kim
Shobe, Mary
Skvarla, Melvyn
Sozen, Mete & Joan
Spritz Jewelers
Steffensen, Margaret
Stonehill's Books
Stotler, Edie
Strang, Phil
Sun Singer Spirits
Temperley, Nicholas & Mary
That's Rentertainment
Thompson, Robert & Karen
Thornton-Walter, Joy
Triandis, Pola
Triple T Car Wash
Walker, Shirley
Watkins, Julie
Watkins, O.J.
Watkins, Ruth
Weber, Wayne & Anne
Weir, Morton & Cecelia
Whitt, Greg & Dixie
Wind, Water & Light Gallery
World Harvest Intl Foods
Young, Bob
Ziemer Gallery

SPURLOCK MUSEUM

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2–JULY 11, 2010

**Campbell Gallery Exhibit: Korean
Funerary Figures: Companions for
the Journey to the Other World**

Organized by the Korea Society, New York City

Death is a given of the human condition that touches everyone in every age. In almost all cultures, the trauma of death is countered by artistic expressions of great richness. In Korea during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, artisans carved wooden figures—called *kokdu*—that were used to decorate the funeral bier. This exhibition features a collection of over 70 *kokdu* that offer rare insights into characteristically Korean attitudes towards death. The figures of acrobats, clowns, and whimsical mystical animals included among *kokdu* expresses a joyfulness that may seem incompatible with mourning, but the inclusion of such figures actually reflects a sophisticated appreciation of the fleeting nature of all experience. The use of *kokdu* in funeral rites also expresses a deeply held wish that the transition to the other world will occur in an atmosphere of joyful celebration supported by many helpers.

— from the exhibition text

The Spurlock Museum's changing exhibits are made possible through a gift from Allan C. and Marlene S. Campbell and supported in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010

**Opening Celebration for Korean
Funerary Figures: Companions for
the Journey to the Other World**

Time: 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

Join us for the opening celebration of the special bilingual exhibit *Korean Funerary Figures: Companions for the Journey to the Other World*. Explore the galleries and enjoy family-friendly activities including Korean folktales and hands-on crafts for all ages.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2010

**Spurlock Museum WorldFest
2010**

Time: 12:30–4:00 p.m.

Recommended donation: \$5

Last year's spring festival broke all attendance records, and this year promises to be just as popular, celebrating the wondrous variety of performance arts practiced around the world and offering hands-on activities for everyone.

**AsiaLENS: AEMS Documentary
Film and Discussion Series at the
Spurlock 2009–2010**

Cost: Free

This series of public film screenings and lecture/discussion programs is organized by the Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) at the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies. It is planned in collaboration with the Spurlock Museum and presented in the Knight Auditorium. Films to be shown include *My Daughter the Terrorist* (March 2) and *Betrayal*, the Oscar-nominated story of a Laotian refugee family (April 6). Guest scholars and members of the campus and local communities will introduce the films and lead post-screening audience discussions. Check the Museum's calendar of events for screening times and www.aems.illinois.edu for film descriptions and trailers.